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NEWS AND NOTES

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DRAMATICS

The Committee on Plays in Schools and Colleges, reorganized and renamed the Committee on School and College Dramatics, wishes to resume activity. (See the January, 1915, issue of the *English Journal* for an account of the work done to date.) It believes more than ever that work in dramatics in schools and colleges should receive special attention and credit. The work of the Drama League, the spread of the Little Theatre and Repertory Players, the increase in the printed drama and books about the theater, the wane of the movies and increased theater attendance, and the consequent need of creating discriminating taste, are the reasons. To this end the committee asks all teachers of English in schools and colleges who see this questionnaire to send as soon as possible their answers to the chairman of the committee.

1. Do you desire in your school a special course in the drama, and will you urge your principal to provide for it? Principal W. F. Slocum, of the Carl Schurz High School, Chicago, says, "The English department must be set free from required work so that it may be possible to form an English class out of those who are particularly interested in dramatics. . . . I consider a well-developed dramatic society the very last finishing touch of the art culture of a school."

2. Will you urge your principal to arrange for credits in English for work done in dramatics, the same as for other work in oral English, or for work done in art or music? Conditions in schools vary; we cannot specify what scheme may be practicable for your school. Will you suggest a simple, reasonable scheme?

3. Will you send to the chairman of the committee, or to any member, notes on some play you have produced with success, arranged like the one published in "The Round Table" in this issue? The editor of the *English Journal* has willingly agreed to publish one regularly with each issue of the magazine.

The chairman of the committee urges all teachers who are in sympathy to send him replies as promptly as possible. If the replies are sufficiently numerous, uniform, and practicable, the National Council, at its November, 1917, meeting in Chicago, will be urged to take action leading to definite results.

The Committee would be glad to hear from the teachers in whose schools the conditions of questions 1 and 2 are already in operation just what is being done, and how the conditions were secured. Meanwhile, if any teachers are able to secure the above-mentioned results, the committee would be glad to hear about it. While answers to the questionnaire are desired at once, teachers with later information may send it in by October 1, 1917, the date at which a report to the National Council will be drafted.

J. MILNOR DOREY, *Chairman*, High School,
Trenton, N.J.

ALLAN ABBOTT, Teachers College, Columbia
University, New York, N.Y.

ANNA G. BREWSTER, High School, North-
ampton, Mass.

SARAH E. SIMONS, Central High School,
Washington, D.C.

MARGARET BAKER, Parker High School,
Chicago, Ill.

O. B. SPERLIN, Stadium High School, Tacoma,
Wash.

THE ASSOCIATIONS

A STATE ASSOCIATION AT WORK¹

The tenth annual meeting of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English was held at Urbana, November 24, in connection with the State High School Conference. About four hundred teachers were present at one or both of the sessions. One characteristic of the programs is becoming more strongly emphasized each year: the Association has practically discarded the general, inspirational addresses under which many teachers have suffered long and patiently, and is using the time for presenting and discussing reports of the work done by various committees during the twelve months for furthering in different ways investigations already under way, or for planning new enterprises. For example, the chairman of the Library Committee presented a list of books suitable for high-school libraries, and asked the teachers present to indicate which of these books they had found of most actual value in their work. The lists of these books, with their prices and worth for

¹Referred to in editorial in February *Journal* and accidentally omitted.

the school library carefully indicated, was published in the January *Bulletin* of the Association.

Miss Eva Mitchell, of Bloomington, presented some interesting and valuable results from her questionnaire on the high-school literary society. In connection with this investigation the Association offered three cash prizes for the best programs for a meeting of such a society. The committee appointed to judge these programs awarded the first prize to Miss Alice Bidwell, of Freeport, the second to Miss Laura G. Whitmire, of Aurora, and the third to Miss Clara Hawkes, of Decatur.

Professor D. K. Dodge, of the University of Illinois, and Principal W. E. Andrews, of Pana, discussed two phases of the question of securing better everyday English. The former suggested a very interesting and practical list of minimum essentials for spoken English upon which every teacher in the school may well insist; the latter told of a scheme in use in his school of requiring students in all subjects to recite in well-constructed paragraphs.

Miss Isabel McKinney, of the Eastern Illinois State Normal, summarized the work she has been doing toward forming a scale for grading compositions, and distributed a set of eight themes, which were then ranked by the members of the Association. Her investigation evoked an animated discussion of the "Minimum Requirements in Composition for the Ninth and Tenth Years," which the Association had adopted, and which had been printed as a four-page folder. Several thousands of these leaflets have been ordered by Illinois high schools, and they may still be had in quantities, at one cent each, by addressing the *Bulletin of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English* at Urbana.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: president, L. V. Cavins, of Joliet; secretary, E. C. Baldwin, of Urbana; treasurer, Miss Kathleen Roberts, of Champaign; members of the Executive Committee: Miss Florence Skeffington, of Charleston; H. G. Paul, of Urbana; and Miss Julia Gettemy, of Moline.

The meetings were indeed well worth while; they began on time; there was a fine spirit of co-operation; only physically did the members "come out by the same door wherein they went"; and the Association adjourned busy with plans for the coming year's work.

H. G. PAUL

A NEW COUNCIL

At the time of the meeting of the State Teachers' Association in Cheyenne, November 29—December 2, we organized the Wyoming Council of English Teachers.

The general scope of the work is broad enough to include all phases of English teaching in the state—rural, elementary, grammar school, high school, and college. The specific aims of the organization are fourfold: (1) to organize the English teaching interests of the state; (2) to conduct investigations for the purpose of suggestions relative to teaching English; (3) to co-operate in all possible ways with other similar organizations throughout the country; (4) to promote acquaintance and good-fellowship among English teachers in the state.

Much interest is being shown in the organization, and a large number of English teachers, supervisors, and schools have joined the Council as charter members.

The Council hopes to accomplish much constructive work and to be able to be of practical help to the English-teaching interests of the state.

FLORA H. KRUEGER, *Secretary*

OREGON COUNCIL

The meeting of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English during the Christmas vacation, December 28 and 29, was both pleasant and profitable. The papers were as follows: "The Periodical in the English Course of the High School," Frederick Berchtold, Oregon Agricultural College; "Dramatization in the High Schools," Rosa B. Parrott, Oregon Normal School; "English with English Left Out," Julia Burgess, University of Oregon; "The Correlation of Latin and English," A. P. McKinley, Lincoln High School, Portland; "The Vital versus the Conventional in the Teaching of English," Guy E. Dyar, Eugene High School, Eugene; "Mehr Licht," Ernest S. Bates, University of Oregon. The Oregon workers are eagerly looking forward to the program meeting of the Council in connection with the National Education Association gathering at Portland next summer.

Ernest S. Bates, University of Oregon, Eugene, is president and Rosa B. Parrott, Oregon Normal School, Monmouth, secretary for the next year.

OHIO COUNCIL

At Columbus, on December 27, we completed the organization of the Ohio Council of Teachers of English, and adopted a constitution which affiliates with both the National Council and the State Teachers' Association. The attendance was larger than at the last meeting.

Miss Clara Maetzel, of South High School, Columbus, is chairman for next year, and the members of the executive committee are Ethel

M. Parmenter, of East Technical High School, Cleveland; Dean E. W. Chubb, Ohio University, Athens; and C. E. Thomas, Woodward High School, Cincinnati.

C. E. THOMAS, *Secretary*

THE NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS

On November 15, 1916, the North Dakota Association of English Teachers met in Fargo. The president, Dean V. P. Squires, of the University, gave a vigorous and suggestive address on the "Doctoral Thesis in English," emphasizing the desirability of basing such theses on the lives and works of contemporary authors.

There followed a lively round-table discussion of the new high-school course in English, especially that part devoted to technical grammar. A committee of five was appointed to consider this subject and report at the next annual meeting.

The training of teachers of high-school English was then commented on, first from the point of view of the colleges of the state, then from that of the teachers themselves. In order to make work in English more vital it was suggested that the colleges lay increased emphasis on contemporaneous literature, on interpretative reading, on systematic co-operation with other departments in the effort to secure better speech, and on the necessity of thorough training in allied subjects.

The new officers are as follows: president, Mr. G. L. Paine, Mayville Normal; vice-president, Miss Ruth Guild, Fargo High School; secretary and treasurer, Miss Hilda Taylor, Jamestown College; Executive Committee, Miss Julia McDonough, Minot Normal; and Miss Bertha McKechney, Lisbon High School.

HILDA TAYLOR, *Secretary*

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

The *Bulletin* of the University of Texas under date of November 10, 1916, is devoted to English. Three articles, "Teaching Literature in the Secondary School," by J. F. Royster; "Concerning Correlation in the Teaching of English Composition," by Pauline Warner; and "Spelling in College and High School," by L. W. Payne, are included, together with a questionnaire addressed to the English teachers of Texas.—The Bureau of Education at Washington has issued its *Educational Directory for 1916-17* as Bulletin No. 43, Series of 1916.—Another important bulletin of the Bureau is that on *Vocational Secondary Educa-*

tion, No. 21, Series of 1916.—A series of highly important addresses on "Education and American Citizenship" has been printed in the *Teachers College Record*, March–November, 1916.—*Social Studies in Secondary Education*, a report of one of the committees of the National Commission, has been issued as Bulletin No. 28, Series of 1916, by the Bureau of Education.

The February *Bulletin* of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English is chiefly a list of modern plays for reading. The Chicago Public Library has published a list of "Actable One-Act Plays" which will be widely useful. The Drama League of America, 1145 Marquette Bldg., Chicago, has a list of "Plays for Amateurs," arranged by Professor J. M. Clapp. All these are supplementary to the National Council's "Plays for High-School and College Production."

THE PERIODICALS

GRAMMAR, THE BANE OF BOYHOOD

Professor Burgess Johnson, of Vassar College, has discovered that his small boy is laboring with the same formal grammatical abstractions which wrung his own soul at a like period. Writing in *Harpers* for December, 1916, he explains how false to child psychology, and to the true method of art mastery as well, is the still-prevalent method of grammatical and rhetorical definition and analysis. Two things, he thinks, are essential to growth in power of English expression: vocabulary and sympathy with the point of view of your audience. These factors are ignored in the textbooks commonly used, and evidently are not prized by teachers. The real difficulty is probably with the latter.

NATURE IN WHITTIER

The Nation for January 4 contained a very readable paper on "Nature in Whittier," by Norman Foerster. The writer notes the familiarity with rural life so evident in Whittier's writings, and remarks upon the fact that the poet sensed external nature vividly although he was color-blind and had no ear for music. He observed the sea, the wild life about his home, and especially the trees in the valleys and on the mountains of the vicinity. But Whittier was more than an observer of nature; he loved nature for its beneficent, healing influence. In doing so, however, he maintained a wise balance and sanity.

MEASURING SIXTH-GRADE COMPOSITION

Among the numerous articles on educational measurements to be found in the current issues of the educational periodicals is one describing "A Scale for Measuring the General Merit of English Composition in the Sixth Grade," by Frederick S. Breed and F. W. Frostic, of the University of Michigan, which appears in the *Elementary School Journal* for January. The occasion was that of a survey of the instruction in ten Michigan cities, and the method employed was that described by Professor Hillegas in his account of the formation of the Hillegas-Thorndike scale. Sixty judges were employed, of whom twenty were specialists in English. A similar scale, it may be added, has just been published by Teachers College, Columbia University, as the work of Dr. M. R. Trabue.

A SURVEY OF SPEECH DEFECTS

One of the most thorough of the surveys of speech defects found among children in the lower grades was recently made by Dr. Smiley Blanton, of the University of Wisconsin, in the schools of Madison. First a careful analysis of speech defects was provided, so that different types might be listed separately. These included stuttering, lisping, thick speech, indistinct speech, aphasia, mutism, and nasality. The percentage of children with defects was found to be 5.69, nearly twice that of previous surveys, which have depended largely on examinations by the teachers themselves. The first grade contained 11.05 per cent, as contrasted with 4.51 per cent in the seventh grade. Four special causes of defects are assigned: (1) the beginning of formal study; (2) the breaking of home associations, (3) the change in dentition, (4) the study of reading. The writer concludes that speech defects are more common than has been reported, that such defects are related to the problem of feeble-minded and retarded children, and that every large school system should employ special teachers qualified to treat the children having speech defects.

A NEW PLAN OF ADMISSION TO THE WOMEN'S COLLEGES

In *Education* for January is an outline of the new "comprehensive" plan of examinations for entrance which Mount Holyoke, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley have agreed to substitute for the system of certification which has been in vogue. The older plan of "restricted" examinations, says the writer, President Burton of Smith College, will be retained as an alternative.